

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Hiram L. Fong

Hiram L. Fong, was born in Honolulu October 1, 1907, and spent his childhood in Kalihi, O'ahu. Educated at McKinley High School, University of Hawai'i and Harvard Law School, Fong was first elected to the territorial house in 1938 as a Republican. He served as vice speaker of the house, 1944 to 1948; and speaker of the house, 1948 to 1954.

In 1942, Fong founded the law firm of Fong, Miho, Choy and Robinson. In 1950, he was elected delegate to the territorial constitutional convention, serving as a vice president representing O'ahu. During the 1950s, Fong was an active supporter of statehood for Hawai'i, lobbying here and in Washington, D.C. He left his law firm in 1959 when he was elected to the United States Senate, where he served until he retired in 1976.

Throughout his business career Fong had various diversified financial interests. He founded Grand Pacific Life Insurance in 1957, and in 1952, he founded Finance Factors, Ltd. He continues to be chairman of the company.

Tape No. 17-6-1-88

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Hiram L. Fong (HF)

March 30, 1988

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Chris Conybeare (CC) and Daniel W. Tuttle, Jr. (DT)

Joy Chong: The following interview is with Senator Hiram Fong. It was conducted by Chris Conybeare and Dan Tuttle on March 30, 1988 at Senator Fong's office at Finance Factors in Honolulu. The following is tape number one.

CC: Senator, as we started an interview about three years ago, we did one about statehood with you, and that led to the creation of an ongoing project on the part of [Hawai'i] Public Television that's been funded by the [Hawai'i State] Legislature, and that is to try to get oral history interviews with people who've been active in Hawai'i politics. You, of course, are one of the main people that we want to talk to. And we want to start all of them the same way. I need a little bit about your background. If you could share with us, briefly, something about your family circumstances, and then a little bit about your own schooling, and then we can get into the more political history part. But if you could just give us a little bit about your own family background.

HF: I was born in Kalihi, 1906, October 15, although my age in politics is a little different. It says October 1, 1907. The reason is because my birth was never recorded [with] the [Territorial] Board of Health and it was always given to me as the Chinese date, and we couldn't translate that and we just guessed at it. But actually, after I was old enough, I was able to find out that the real date was October 15, 1906. And that's the reason why there is a mistake in my birth dates.

My father [Sau How Fong] came from China when he was fifteen years old to work the plantations. My mother [Lum Shee Fong] came when she was ten years old with her aunt. My father had made some money and was going back to China. And he came down from Maui but he liked to gamble. So he lost most of his money and he decided to get married (chuckles). He was match mate with my mother. The family had thirteen children, two passed away in infancy, leaving eleven of us surviving. There were six boys and five girls, and I'm the seventh of eleven children. So the numbers seven and eleven are very lucky for me.

(Laughter)

HF: I went to Kalihi-Waena School. Graduated from there in 1920. Went to McKinley [High School], graduated in 1924. Went to work for three years at Pearl Harbor [Naval Shipyard] as a clerk, not having the wherewithal to pursue my college education. Then I left my work and went to the University of Hawai'i. I finished the university in three years [1930] with honors

and then I worked for two more years. While at the university I was asked by Patrick Gleason, who was then the sheriff of the City [and County of Honolulu], to campaign for him on the political stump. So every night I preceded him on a political stump and extolled his virtues, and he was elected sheriff. There were two big offices here in Hawai'i. It was the sheriff's office and the mayor's office and these two jobs had patronage. The delegate [to Congress] had no patronage and the governor was selected by the president of the United States, so these two [sheriff and mayor] were the big offices here that were elective. Then, after two years, the election of the mayor came up and I was asked by [George F.] Wright [mayor of Honolulu, 1930–38] (who was then a supervisor) to campaign for him. I went on the political stump every night again extolling his virtues and he was elected.

And when I graduated, I didn't have the wherewithal to go to Harvard Law School. I filed my application with Harvard Law School and they told me that the University of Hawai'i was not accredited. Then I took that matter up with Arthur G. Smith, who was then on the board of regents [of the university 1918–38], he was a graduate of Harvard Law School. And he wrote to Harvard, and Harvard sent me a letter saying that if I were in the upper 10 percent of the class, they would try me. And I was in the upper 10 percent of the class. But I didn't have the wherewithal to go. So I went to the mayor. He gave me a job as the chief clerk of the bureau of [county] waters and sewers. That job was paying \$225 a month, and that was at the depth of the depression. And everybody's salary was cut. So that job was cut from \$225 to \$175. And I worked there for two years, saved \$2,000, then I went to law school. Came back in three years. Borrowed two years of tuition from the law school. At that time, the tuition was \$400 a year. And with a few dollars from my mother and my sister, I was able to complete my studies [in 1935], owing about \$3,000 when I came home. The mayor told me before I left that if I came home he would give me a deputy county attorneyship. When I came home, he appointed me as third deputy city and county attorney and he gave me the salary of \$200 a month. So I went to Mayor Wright and I said, "Mr. Mayor, I went to Harvard Law School. Spent three years there, spent \$5,000, and you only gave me a twenty-five dollar raise."

(Laughter)

HF: He says, "Hiram, you don't know anything." He said, "Take the job." So I took the job and stayed there for three years and felt very, very disappointed because it wasn't challenging. It wasn't challenging. So, I decided to run for the [Territorial] House of Representatives. I got elected to the house of representatives [in 1938]. And at that time there were twenty-eight Republicans and two Democrats elected to the house of representatives. And somehow I was a maverick Republican. I didn't like the idea that [Roy] Vitousek, who was the leader of the Republican group, was so tied up with the sugar interests here that everything was done in behalf of some of the big interests here. So, as maverick as I was, I would not vote for him for speaker. So he took it out on me and kept me from my seat for eleven days. He said that I was a deputy of the city and county attorney's office and therefore I was an official of the government. And the Organic Act says that if you're an official of the government, you cannot run for office. But I maintained that I was just an employee and that I was not an official. And after eleven days, after they secured all of the various opinions drawn by the attorney general and from private counsel, they finally thought that if they declared me illegal for office, that I would run again and get reelected anyway. So finally they sat me, twenty-eight to two.

(Laughter)

DT: Who did you support for speaker?

HF: I didn't have anybody.

DT: You didn't have anybody to support.

CC: I have a question that's kind of interesting. You say you're sort of a maverick Republican. Why were you a Republican? I mean, was there any reason? What made you become a Republican?

HF: Well, my brother was a Republican. He was a territorial statistician, an accountant. And he was tied in—he was the one that's friendly to the Republican officials. And when they came to the university and asked me to speak for the mayor, he was a Republican, the mayor, and the sheriff was a Republican, so, in that respect, I just gravitated to the Republican party.

DT: This was your brother Leonard?

HF: My brother Leonard. He was (for) fourteen years (elected) clerk of the City and County of Honolulu.

DT: Right, I remember him well.

CC: Of course, those days there weren't an awful lot of Democrats, anyway, were there?

HF: No, as I said, the house of representatives was twenty-eight to two. Twenty-eight to two.

DT: Who were the two Democrats just for . . .

HF: The two Democrats . . .

DT: Do you remember who there were?

HF: . . . were Holt and Schumacher.

DT: Holt and Schumacher, mm hmm.

HF: George [H. "Duke"] Holt and [Fred L.] Schumacher.

DT: Very interesting.

CC: How did you feel with starting out as a maverick and having to fight to even get your seat? Once they sat you, did you have problems working with the . . .

HF: Oh yes, I had a lot of problems. And we built the opposition. And, finally, we took over the legislature. It was very, very (ironic)—as you look back, it seemed very incongruous that here I was a maverick Republican, and then in time, we really made the legislature a little more liberal and we were able to take over the legislature. I was able to instrumentally get Paschoal, Manny [Manuel G.] Paschoal, elected into the speakership [1945–47]. And I became vice-speaker [in 1945]. And then subsequently, I became speaker of the house [1949–53].

- DT: Now, what faction would you---could you identify this as a faction as such? In other words, it was not the Vitousek group, obviously.
- HF: There was an anti-Vitousek group.
- DT: So it's anti-Vitousek group and who were your lead persons? Paschoal, you say, was sort of one of your lead . . .
- HF: Well, actually, I think I was the lead.
- DT: Oh, you were the lead. You became vice-speaker. Did Mary Noonan---was she a part of politics at this time?
- HF: Oh, that was afterwards.
- DT: That came afterwards.
- HF: That was afterwards. [Mary Noonan was the first woman to become chair of the O'ahu County Republican party, in 1952.]
- DT: And Joe [Joseph] Itagaki came afterwards. [Itagaki served in the house, 1947-51, and the senate, 1952-56.]
- HF: Yeah. You see, Mary Noonan came afterwards because they [the Republican party] didn't have any control over us. The party officials felt that they should have control over the Republicans. And they didn't have any control over (the legislature). And that's why the closed primary came into effect. It was Mary Noonan and Joe Itagaki who decided that this was time for the party to exert its influence and that they should really discipline us. And I told Mary Noonan, I said, "If you will force the people to (decide to vote either) Republican or Democrat, you (are) going to find that the Republican party will take a very bad licking." And surely we did because once you make a man choose . . .
- DT: You mean this was later, this was later into the '50s.
- HF: Yeah. And that's one of the reasons why the Republican party lost out. It was the closed primary that really killed them.
- DT: It really wasn't a tightly closed primary, though, was it? It was sort of a---sort of like we have now?
- HF: Yes, you went there [i.e., the polling place], they gave you a [ballot]. You either vote Democrat or Republican. And then, subsequently, when the Democrats got into power, they really copper rivited it.
- DT: You could do this in secret, though. You could choose your party in secret at least. But it had a big dark line down the ballot, didn't they?
- HF: Gee, I don't remember. But you either vote on one side or the other.
- DT: One side or the other.

HF: Subsequently [in the '70s], the Democrats passed the law and said that you had to register first to either be Democrat or Republican. [From 1970-79, a voter had to declare party preference or affiliation before receiving a ballot (closed primary).]

DT: So you would attribute to this . . .

HF: This is one of the big factors.

DT: . . . the fact that the Democratic party was able to get going.

HF: Yes, it was one of the big factors.

DT: After World War II. Mm hmm.

CC: Let's go back a little bit because I know when you were in the legislature, you were identified with at least one piece of legislation that traditionally would be, you would associate more with the Democratic party and that's the Little Wagner Act [to allow unions to organize plantation workers].

HF: Yes.

CC: How did that come about and what was your reaction to that?

HF: Well, I think the reason why the [Little] Wagner Act went through [1944] was because the big interests didn't understand it. Although they knew it was there, they didn't understand it. I don't think they understood the implications of that act. And I didn't understand the implications of that act. I thought that was the right thing, that the other people [e.g., non-agricultural workers, such as longshoremen] had the right of collective bargaining then why shouldn't they [plantation workers] have the right to collective bargaining. But the deep implication of that act was not felt or understood by the people who were in big business here.

DT: Well, who were your chief lieutenants as you became vice-speaker and speaker of the house?

HF: Thomas [T.] Sakakihara was really . . .

DT: Thomas Sakakihara . . .

HF: He was really a right-hand man to me. Very strong.

DT: Yeah, he's something of a maverick in his own way.

HF: Well, we used to call him the hatchet man.

(Laughter)

DT: He was quite a speech maker, . . .

HF: Yes, he was.

DT: . . . as I recall, in the house. [Sakakihara served in the house, 1933–54.]

HF: And then my subsequent fights was because of him. The Republicans didn't want me to be speaker because he [Sakakihara] was the chairman of the appropriation [i.e., finance] committee [in 1951 and 1953] and he was tough with them. But I wouldn't desert him. So they fought me. And that's how some of those fights came about later on.

DT: Was [D.] Hebden Porteus in your group or . . .

HF: No, Hebden Porteus was against me.

DT: Was against you? Who else was in your group then in the house?

HF: Oh, there's Apaka—[Alfred] Afat Apaka, [Richard P.] St. Sure.

DT: St. Sure.

HF: Yeah, St. Sure was with me. [Robert L. Hind, Jr.] was also with me.

DT: Hind.

HF: You see, it was very close, these battles. One or two votes meant you were speaker, you weren't speaker.

DT: So you had, say, twelve, thirteen, fourteen . . .

HF: That's all you needed.

DT: . . . people is all you needed.

HF: And there always was a fight for the speakership. (They were) constantly trying to throw me out. Because of---you see it was the Fourth District versus the Fifth District. Fifth District, the dividing line was Nu'uani Street, it went right up to the Pali. And Kailua was on this side, Fourth District. And when people campaigned in the Fifth District, they always refer to the Fourth District as the "silk stocking district." The silk stocking district (people were the rich people—their elected representatives were) always against me. (Chuckles)

CC: But did that situation make for a coalition kind of politics with the Democrats? I mean, didn't that . . .

HF: Once, in a while, yes.

CC: In '49, didn't you become speaker as a result of a coalition with Democrats?

HF: No, no. When I first became speaker, I got the Republicans (to all vote for me).

CC: Oh, you did.

HF: It was subsequent to that they tried to dump Sakakihara that I stood by Sakakihara. And they told me if I let Sakakihara go, they would let me be speaker, and that's where we had a fight.

DT: And so . . .

HF: And they (meaning the party officials) almost threw me out of the party.

DT: When was this, '50 or '52?

HF: It was about '52, I think [possibly '53?].

DT: Fifty-two, uh huh. [Sakakihara fight was either in 1951 or 1953. The legislature met every two years; there was no session in 1952.]

HF: They almost threw me out of the party because they said that I had a coalition. That coalition really made Sam [Samuel Wilder] King governor. [Randolph] Crossley was due to become governor. [President Dwight] Eisenhower had already selected Crossley to be the governor. But he couldn't control us in the legislature. And because we had this fight in our own party, and Senator [Robert] Taft [U.S. Senator from Ohio], and Joe [Joseph P.] Farrington [Hawai'i's delegate to Congress] was backing Sam King, finally Eisenhower yielded to Sam King to become governor.

DT: Yeah, there was an association with Taft. So this was sort of decided at the Morningside Conference, purportedly, at any rate.

HF: Yeah, purportedly that Crossley had it, but [Joseph] Farrington wouldn't go for it. And Taft fought for Sam King. And then when they found out that Crossley couldn't control us here—Crossley was then head of the [Republican] party.

DT: Right.

HF: He couldn't control us and then Sam King was finally appointed. That's one of the reasons why Crossley was never governor. He almost became—he was within reach of the governorship two times. If he had just listened to us. But Crossley was just a hardheaded individual. He knew everything. When he ran for governor against John Burns [in 1966], he was only a thousand votes behind. Twelve hundred votes, something like that, wasn't it? [Burns defeated Crossley in the 1966 election for governor, 108,840 votes to 104,324.]

DT: Yeah, it was pretty close.

HF: Yeah.

DT: It was close.

HF: And he wouldn't listen to us. I almost left his campaign, I was so angry with him. But, I felt as a Republican, I continued with him.

CC: Even though back in the former days you were on opposite sides of the . . .

HF: Yes.

CC: . . . issues many times.

- HF: Yes.
- CC: You still felt that he deserved your support as a Republican?
- HF: Yes, I supported him but he just wouldn't listen to us. If he had listened to us he would be governor today.
- DT: Was Crossley ever in the house?
- HF: He was in the house [1943-45]. . .
- DT: House for a while . . .
- HF: . . . from Kaua'i.
- DT: . . . before he moved to the senate [1959-64].
- HF: From Kaua'i, yeah.
- DT: But he was obviously what you call the "Merchant Street" wing of the party, whereas you were not?
- HF: Well, I was never in the Merchant Street [wing] of the party.
- DT: Right. (Chuckles)
- HF: I know when Sam King was head of the constitutional convention [1950], that the Merchant Street went out and raised a lot of money for him. But the time that I was speaker of the [territorial] house, all the time I was [in] the [United States] Senate, I never got any contribution from Merchant Street.
- CC: Let's stop right there. The tape's about to run out, I think.
- JC: The following is tape number two, interview with Senator Hiram Fong.
- DT: You were the leader, we might put it this way, of the grassroots section of the Republican party. Your own coalition, as it were. Yet when it came to the big election of 1954, you suffered defeat along with the rest of the Republicans, didn't you?
- HF: Yes. [The six winners in the Fifth Senatorial District were George R. Ariyoshi, O. Vincent Esposito, Yasutaka Fukushima, Charles Kauhane, Philip Minn, and Steere Noda. Republicans who lost include John Ayamo, Iris Cullen, Ah Chew Lau, Stan Sabihon, Clarence Shimamura, and Fong.]
- DT: This was most unexpected. I think people were surprised, of course, at the overall result of the election, but they were especially surprised that you would be defeated, in particular, because you were in the Fifth District and had a stronghold on your seat and that sort of thing.
- HF: Well, you got to understand that Fifth District is Democratic.

DT: It had been traditionally Democratic . . .

HF: Very.

DT: But then you had been in the liberal wing, . . .

HF: Yes.

DT: . . . closest wing of the Republican Party . . .

HF: Very true.

DT: . . . to the Democrats.

HF: You see, in that election, a Filipino boy came in. You see, election is very peculiar. It all depends who's running. As a Chinese person, a person of Chinese ancestry, normally, Chinese voters are very few in the Fifth District. When you run against other people who have bigger ethnic support, you tend to pick up votes from a lot of ethnic groups. That gives you some strength. But when you—like the Filipino folks, there were no Filipino running, so I could pick up the Filipino vote. But then at that time. . . . What's his name, the Filipino boy that came in [Stan Sabihon?]? I forgot his name already. He ran and the Filipinos plunked for him.

DT: I see.

HF: And so I lost the Filipino vote. And that's why, in the election, one against one, I'm very effective. But one in six, I'm not.

DT: Yeah, I think there were. . . . Was there five to be elected in those days?

HF: Six.

DT: Six?

HF: Six to be elected. But one in six, you see, there's a lot of plunking. And the ones with big ethnic vote back of them have better chance.

DT: So you really feel people voted along ethnic lines to an extent or . . .

HF: Oh, yes, there's no question about it. No question about it, Hawai'i people do vote along ethnic lines, yeah. But if there's one against one, then you can pick up quite a number of people from the other ethnic groups.

At that time, I was ready to quit. I had spent so much time in the legislature so I thought I might as well quit. But my brother Leonard came to me and said, "Well, you better run again," see. So, half-heartedly I did run. In those days, we don't go house-to-house. We don't campaign that way. We get on a political stump, make a few speeches and go home.

DT: The old party rally, in other words.

HF: Yes, yes, yes. My friend Thomas Sakakihara used to give me hell. He said, "Is that the way you campaign?"

I said, "Yeah, that's how we campaign."

He says, "In Hawai'i [Island], we go see the guy two, three times." Like in Kentucky, they said they never vote for a senator unless they touch him.

(Laughter)

HF: Well, over here, we used to take it very easily. And I thought I was at the point where it was about time for me to quit, you see.

DT: So you were a little bit overconfident the way most of the other Republicans were that year?

HF: Yes, we were a little overconfident and also I didn't have my heart in it. So I lost by, I think, thirty-one votes. [Fong came in seventh.]

DT: Yeah, it was close.

HF: Yeah, very close, I lost by thirty-one votes. And so that was it.

CC: Were you surprised at how well the Democrats did? Did you have any idea they were going to do . . .

HF: Well, you see, what really happened was this. At that time, we were just entering into the five-day week. Ben Dillingham [Benjamin F. Dillingham II] was in the senate. I was speaker of the house. The people used to work half a day on Saturdays and we were going to eliminate the Saturday working. But Ben Dillingham cut out three holidays from the public employees. Now people don't realize that. (We) cut out three holidays. He (said) that since we're going to give them that half a day off, he took three holidays away from them, government employees, and they all went after us. The government employees went after us. They wanted a classification. We didn't give them the classification. So they were angry at us. And the public employees voted against us. And the union people voted against us. And that was a very big reason why.

DT: Yes, during the '54 campaign, you were among those who went out to the 'Āina Haina School and debated with the Democrats, you and Sam [Samuel P.] King and I think. . . . Oh, can't remember his name right at the moment. It'll come to me in a moment. Tsukiyama. Wilfred [C.] Tsukiyama [territorial senate, 1947-59; senate president, 1949-54.] went out to 'Āina Haina. Do you remember that evening?

HF: No, I don't.

DT: You don't remember that evening when Dan [Daniel K.] Inouye got into a debate with Sam P. King?

HF: No, that I don't remember that.

DT: You don't remember?

HF: I don't remember that.

DT: I thought you might because that was one of the, sort of the media highlights because this was broadcast on radio. And, of course, in that day, in '54, TV had very little impact, but radio had quite an impact.

HF: And then the government employees then had a strong union [Hawai'i Government Employees' Association]. And then their, the union leader. You remember him?

DT: Jack Hall?

HF: No. Union leader for government employees?

DT: Oh, Charlie [Charles R.] Kendall [Executive Director, Hawai'i Government Employees' Association, 1946-65].

HF: Charlie Kendall.

DT: Charlie Kendall.

HF: Charlie Kendall went all out against us. And the government employees went against us. The three holidays (the government employees lost—the classification they did not get), together with a closed primary, did the trick.

DT: That's very interesting that you would have that feeling that that was a major factor in the debacle, rather than other things which had been attributed to that election.

HF: Yes, but nobody else speaks (to) that. But probably they didn't know. It was the three holidays we took away from the government employees. You know, if they take away three holidays from you, you're not going to forget us.

CC: Even today, the whole issue of holidays . . .

(Laughter)

CC: . . . is very big at the legislature, right?

DT: Before we continue on, after '54, after the so-called debacle of that year, let's step back for just a moment. You were also, I believe, in the constitutional convention [1950], were you not?

HF: Yes, yes.

DT: You have any vivid recollections of that experience? Were you anxious for statehood even at that period?

HF: Yeah, we called for a constitutional convention because we thought that that was the best way of getting Congress to give us statehood. Sam [Samuel Wilder] King was elected governor—I mean, president of the con-con and I was one of the vice-presidents [along with Thomas T. Sakakihara, Arthur Woolaway, and Charles Rice]. And Judge [William H.] Heen was the

chairman of the [con-con] judiciary committee. [Heen was a member of the judiciary committee; J. Garner Anthony was chair.] And he wanted a very small senate and a very small house of representatives. I was for a big one. We voted him down several times, but he came back again (and again), always with the same discussion that the house of representatives was too big and the senate was too big. We defeated him several times, and finally he gave up. And that's the reason why we have a big house of representatives. I felt that with the various ethnic groups in Hawai'i, that to get representation from almost every ethnic group in Hawai'i, that we should have a larger house of representatives. And it shows. It came out that way.

DT: For that same reason, did you support multimember districts rather than single-member districts?

HF: I had nothing to do with that.

DT: Well, multimember districts tended to give us better ethnic representation . . .

HF: Yes.

DT: . . . than single-member districts would, because single-member districts are one takes all. The winner takes all. So, but you had nothing to do with that.

HF: I had nothing to do with that. But I think that they should have multi-elections, electors.

DT: Multimember districts.

HF: Yes.

DT: And so that's exactly where you ended up, in the con-con in 1950. They remained as multimember districts. Any other vivid recollections of that con-con?

HF: Well, there was a fight as to whether the judges would be elected.

DT: Oh, even in those days?

HF: Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes. There was strong feeling that the judges should be elected. Then we went for a strong governor and the governor had all the power.

DT: Well, it's significant that that constitution without any substantive change at all really, is the one that went into effect in 1959 [upon statehood]. So, very conscientious.

HF: Yes. Everybody signed it except Marguerite Ashford. She didn't sign it.

DT: She didn't sign it. Yeah. All righty, well after all the excitement of the late '40s, dip back into the '30s and into the early '50s, suddenly you had been in office for probably . . .

HF: Fourteen years [1939-53].

DT: . . . about sixteen, fourteen years or more? Suddenly you found yourself in private life.

HF: Yes.

DT: So, you decided you'd make a little money. Is that . . .

HF: Well, I said, "The people have spoken . . ."

DT: . . . what you had to do?

HF: Well, you see, there's a big difference between our legislators at that time and the legislature now. I was speaker of the house and yet I was able to practice law. I came to my law office early in the morning and just before nine o'clock I would go up to the house of representatives. I would preside over there. And then right after lunch I would come back to my law office, practice law. That [i.e., elected office] was an avocation for us. They were paying us, what, \$1,000 for a session.

DT: Very small.

HF: Very small money. And it was not one in which you exercise your power. We never exercised our power. We never try to force our opinion on any of the various institutions or any of the government bodies, for example, the University of Hawai'i. I didn't even know Sinclair was a Democrat. President [Gregg M.] Sinclair [of the University of Hawai'i, 1942-55].

DT: Well, he certainly advertised it enough. (Chuckles)

HF: No, no. At that time he never said it. When the Republicans were in control, he never said anything whether he was Democrat or Republican. And I was one of the strongest backers who backed him, you see.

DT: Well, you're right, it was not a major factor. I mean the university was not politicized.

HF: No, it was not politicized.

DT: That's right. That's right.

HF: And we never went into the inner workings of the government. We did it as a public function and we went back to our businesses. But now, you find that these people here they, well, it is their livelihood for many of them. And they have their patronage and it's so vital to them. But in those days, it was not a very, very important thing except that we made our laws and then went home.

DT: No, the reason why I laughed at Gregg Sinclair and his. . . . He used to come around the legislative reference bureau [which was located at UH at that time] and he was always talking like, saying he was a Democrat. And we used to cringe at this because the Republicans were in control of the legislature in the early '50s and we felt this was not helping us get things for the university if he was going around talking about it.

HF: But I never knew that he was Democrat. Oh, I helped him a lot. Even if he were a Democrat, I would have helped him.

DT: Yeah, but I said so, yeah.

HF: But it shows you that we were not very partisan. We were not very partisan.

DT: No, I would agree with that. As a matter of fact, I don't think he was ever punished because he had indicated his Democratic alliance. But he was probably more discrete. He probably watched out where he said these things. I don't know.

(Laughter)

CC: What made you decide to get back into the political fray?

HF: Well, I had been out five years [1954–59]. And I was financially independent. And there were these people who (were running) for office (with less qualifications than I). And I felt that, gee whiz, if they were running for office, (with my) qualifications, (I better run too). At least I (could) say that (I was) a serious candidate. I didn't know whether I would be elected or not, but I was a serious candidate. So I thought I might as well get in.

CC: And this was for the race for . . .

HF: For the Senate?

CC: For U.S. Senate after statehood.

HF: And I went in and I declared that I would run for the A seat. See, you have to declare whether you're going for the A seat or the B seat. And I declared that I would run for the A seat against Judge [William H.] Heen. Judge Heen said that he would run for the A seat. And then [Frank F.] Fasi said he would run for the A seat. And then [Wilfred C.] Tsukiyama came in afterwards and he (ran) for the B seat because I was running for the A seat. And [Oren E.] Long ran for the B seat.

CC: What happened to Heen? What happened? How come he couldn't beat Fasi [in the Democratic primary election for U.S. Senate seat A]?

HF: Well, (nearly) everybody said that as soon as we got statehood, Tsukiyama and Heen would go to the U.S. Senate. (Nearly) everyone said that. Heen was seventy some-odd years old. He relied on his popularity, his years of experience. And here you have the maverick, Fasi. He went on and campaigned like anything and he defeated [Heen]. There were questions from my people whether they should go and vote for Fasi or vote for Heen. And many of them went to vote for Fasi. I said, "You vote for me." I (did not tell) my supporters to go and vote for Fasi. But many of my supporters did go over. They're better politicians than I am, you know. You can't control the voter. You understand that, Dan.

DT: That's true.

HF: Yeah. If he wants to vote for a (person), he's going to vote for him. Never mind what you tell him. Quite a few of my voters, my friends, went to vote for Fasi. And he surprised the people and defeated Heen. And I had no opposition [in the Republican primary]. And (in) the general election, if Heen had been nominated, I would (probably not be) elected, because there were a lot of (members of) my own ethnic group that were for Heen. Because many of

them had been doing business with him.

DT: Well, you probably wouldn't have received the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] support if it had been against Heen even though the ILWU felt he was too old.

HF: Probably, probably. You see, the ILWU didn't like Fasi because Fasi had defeated Mayor [John] Wilson (who was a friend of the ILWU). They didn't like him. And Jack Hall [head of ILWU] felt that he could trust me because when I was in the legislature, when he wanted anything, he came to see me and if I thought it was a good thing, I say, "Okay, we can do it." If we couldn't do it, I say, "No, we can't do it." And he felt that I was honest enough with him and so, his dislike of Fasi, brought the ILWU over on my side.

DT: We'll continue this in just a moment.

CC: We've got to stop and change tapes.

JC: The following is tape number three, continuation of interview with Senator Hiram Fong.

CC: Before we get into that [1959 U.S. Senate] campaign after statehood, were you surprised that Bill [William F.] Quinn was appointed as the governor when he was appointed? Was that a surprise to you?

HF: Yes, because he was nowhere in sight. Sam [Samuel Wilder] King was there and he was doing a good job. He was a part-Hawaiian. He had been delegate to Congress and there's no reason why he should have been replaced.

CC: Why do you think he was? What happened?

HF: They said they wanted a younger man to run for the governorship when we became a state.

CC: Was there any question—I have heard, and I can't really pin it down, but that locally, there was some change in the Big Five towards wanting somebody who would have a different attitude towards labor and they wanted somebody that was a little more liberal in their dealings with labor. Have you ever heard anything like that?

HF: No, no, no.

CC: So as far as you know, it was a Washington decision.

HF: It was a Washington decision, yes. Or the secretary of the interior decision.

CC: And how did that affect those of you who had different feelings here?

HF: Well, we had nothing to do with it. We couldn't do anything, you know. All that came from Washington and that's the reason why we wanted statehood because we couldn't control the situation in Washington. Anybody who had a good friend over there could be governor. (Chuckles)

CC: Okay. I just wanted see if we could get any closer to understanding, you know, why Quinn

all of a sudden was appointed.

- DT: Well, of course, King was not really an Eisenhower person to begin with. So, it was very easy for—after four years giving it over to King—that Eisenhower would change his mind. Wouldn't you say that?
- HF: You see in the first election [after statehood], in the first election where the Republicans were able to elect a governor and elect a [U.S.] Senator, you look at the composition of that race. There was (I, a) Chinese; there was [James] Kealoha, Hawaiian; there was Quinn, Caucasian; there was [Charles H.] Silva, Portuguese; and there was [Wilfred] Tsukiyama, Japanese. Now where can you get a combination like that? That's why I say that if [D.G. "Andy"] Anderson had gotten another person with him [for lieutenant governor], (other than a person of his ethnic background, he could have won). You (can't) run two persons of the same background, ethnic background, in Hawai'i (and expect to win).
- DT: Then this was the great virtue of the Republican ticket then in '59, that special election. Because it had ethnic balance.
- HF: Oh yes, that was a strength. That was tremendous ethnic balance. The Filipino vote was not (large) at that time so we didn't have any Filipinos. But we had a Portuguese, we had a Chinese, we had a Japanese, we had (a) *Haole*, and we had (a) Hawaiian).
- DT: Oh, this was always a Jack [John A.] Burns thesis and perhaps you agree with him on that, that really from a party point of view, what you need was ethnic balance.
- HF: That's right.
- DT: If you had ethnic balance, people would vote for a party then.
- HF: Yes.
- DT: But if you did not have ethnic balance, then they would fly off and vote for their favorites on a pick-and-choose, non-political basis, you might say.
- HF: That's true. That's true. And that's the reason why we were so (successful in the first statehood election). And if [Wilfred] Tsukiyama had just spent a few (more) dollars. Tsukiyama didn't (spend much) of his (own) money. If he had spent a few (more) dollars, he would have (won the election). He only lost by a (few) thousand votes [4,577 to Oren E. Long]. That's right.
- DT: Fairly close, yeah. I don't recall the exact figures . . .
- HF: (A few thousand) votes, something like that. [Long defeated Tsukiyama, 83,700 votes to 79,123 votes.] He could have gotten it.
- CC: I think, Dan, you wanted to get back to some questions about the labor support on that election.
- DT: Well, in the '59 election the ILWU support in the general election went to you.

HF: Yes.

DT: Now, if I understood it and I may be wrong, that ILWU support really fell in your lap. It wasn't something that you had gone out to seek, . . .

HF: No.

DT: . . . although you had some ties with the ILWU as a state legislator.

HF: Yes, you see, Fasi, he ran against Mayor [John] Wilson [in the Democratic primary] (in a recent mayoral election), and he was the one that really caused Mayor Wilson to be defeated (for mayor of the City and County of Honolulu).

DT: In '54.

HF: In '54 and Neal Blaisdell became mayor of the city [by defeating Fasi in the general election]. And they never forgot it. So, from that standpoint, the ILWU came over my side.

CC: Who had they backed in---they had backed [William H.] Heen, or no, they had backed Fasi, hadn't they?

HF: No, they didn't.

DT: They didn't really back, but they were willing to—in other words, Heen was expendable, the way I reasoned it. Heen was expendable in their point of view. That he had become increasingly more conservative and he was not a good investment for the future so far as the union was concerned because of his age. And, so, they sort of *kānaluaed* the primary, kept hands off, and then of course, shocked Fasi by their endorsement of you at the last minute. It became public at the last minute.

HF: Yeah, they didn't announce their choice in the primaries.

CC: Do you remember how that came about? Did you have a meeting with the ILWU prior to that announcement or . . .

HF: I think probably some of my friends talked to them, but I didn't.

DT: So it really did fall in your lap, then, so to speak.

HF: Yes, it did.

DT: Well, then it was off to Washington, D.C., and that was quite a transition for somebody from Hawai'i, wasn't it?

HF: Oh, yes.

DT: Suddenly to be a member of the United States Senate, which is called the most exclusive club in the world.

(Laughter)

- HF: I was wondering because of my ethnic background whether I could be effective for Hawai'i. And it was dispelled as soon as I got to Washington, D.C., because there was Vice President [Richard M.] Nixon. There was Senator [Everett M.] Dirksen and there was Senator [Barry M.] Goldwater, and the senator from Kansas, [Frank] Carlson, waiting for me there. And I got on the limousine, Vice President Nixon's limousine, and (he) took me to the hotel where I had a reservation. And then immediately after that they gave me a big reception. The Republican party gave me a big reception. So I felt that at least they've accepted me. And then, later on, the Southern Democrats (found) that I wasn't a (flaming liberal), I wasn't a radical. And they became one of my best friends.
- CC: They were probably pleased to see a Republican at all from Hawai'i. They didn't think any Republicans were going come out of there.
- HF: That's right, that's right, that's right. But they were very, very surprised also that I wasn't such a liberal that they had suspected, that I was quite conservative.
- DT: So you were able to get over the initial shock with a great deal of ease then.
- HF: Yes. It was no trouble at all. No trouble at all.
- DT: Well, within five years of that time, or four years of that time, all of a sudden in 1964 at the Republican [national] convention, you actually had your name placed in nomination as a "favorite son" from Hawai'i.
- HF: Well, you see (I) had to make a little, (I) had to get a little publicity. (Chuckles)
- DT: Oh, yeah, that's right. You had an election again in '64.
- HF: Yeah, I had an election in '64, see. And I was lucky that, in the choice of seats, choice of (six- or four- or two-year) seats, I was able to get the five-year term or six-year term. I knew I would get it, (for) I had read an article that says you've got to keep on being positive. (Chuckles) Like shooting craps. It was an article on shooting craps (in the *Saturday Evening Post*). You got to be very positive, (the article says). And I was very positive I would get the six-year term and I got it. (Chuckles) [In 1959, it was necessary to stagger the two Hawai'i U.S. Senators' terms—Fong was given the six-year term, and Oren E. Long the four-year term.]
- CC: At that convention, when your name was placed in nomination as a favorite son, Mr. [Barry] Goldwater ended up being nominated for president.
- HF: Yes.
- CC: You weren't too enthusiastic about Goldwater, were you?
- HF: Well, no. In that election, everywhere I went they asked me how I stood with Goldwater. There was one Japanese boy who followed me all over the place and he was trying to embarrass me. Every time he asked me where I stood with Goldwater, I said, "Well, Goldwater has his issues, I have my own issues." I said, "I don't agree with him on a lot of things." And then one (night) at the Temple Emanu-El, he got up and asked me where I stood with Goldwater. I (replied), "What's the matter with you? You've asked me (the same

question) several times already. Don't you understand English?"

(Laughter)

HF: And after that, he never asked me any more questions.

CC: Did that cause you any problems within the Republican party here itself because I know that . . .

HF: No, no, no.

CC: There was a group here that was very solidly for Goldwater but they weren't really necessarily in the mainstream of the Republican party.

HF: That's right, but it didn't cause me any trouble at all.

DT: You know as a matter of fact, it probably helped you back home, but I know it was somewhat of an embarrassment and I know those of us who were at the [Republican party national] convention with you felt really badly that on the first ballot, you should have had the entire vote of the Hawai'i delegation.

HF: Of the Hawai'i delegation. No, they (were conservative Republicans). And I've always had (them as my) opposition within my party.

DT: And this didn't happen.

HF: No, it didn't happen.

DT: Yeah, but you got, I think, a four-four split or something like that.

HF: Something like that.

DT: Five to four? And you picked up a few votes from—one from Alaska.

HF: One from Alaska. (Chuckles) I got more votes than what's his name. Who spent a lot of money, Connelly.

(Laughter)

DT: Well, as I recall, you really enjoyed your experiences. You've been back to the conventions in '52 . . .

HF: Yes.

DT: . . . and '56, and in '60.

HF: Yes.

DT: And in '64, I think you probably had your most fun, didn't you . . .

HF: Yes.

DT: . . . being placed in nomination for president and being interviewed by national networks and that sort of thing. So I got the impression you had a ball at that.

HF: Oh, yes. I really enjoyed my career in the United States Senate. But it was a tough thing. You know, I had to come back home about nine times a year and the jet lag was killing. For one-third of a year I wasn't feeling well because of jet lag.

DT: Jet lag, mm hmm.

HF: Yeah.

CC: How would you get along with the rest of the Hawai'i delegation, being a Republican and having to face the fact that your colleagues from the state were from the Democratic party. Did you [have] any problems in that regard?

HF: We didn't have any problems at all. He voted one way and I voted the other way. But I was very angry when they [i.e., the Democratic party establishment, led by U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye] used the ethnic issue on me in my reelection. And they say that they didn't want two Asians up there and that it's about time for me to get out. That's when [Cecil] Heftel ran against me, you know [1970]. And so, I was so angry that I didn't let Inouye walk down the aisle with me. I got (Senator Allott) from Colorado to walk down the aisle with me (chuckles) in the swearing in. [Fong created a national scene when he refused to let fellow senator Inouye escort him for his oath of office in Washington, D.C.]

DT: Are there things that you're particularly proud of with respect to your tenure in the United States Senate?

HF: Yes, I was very strong on civil rights. My amendment on the watchers at the polls went through, and the immigration law which we changed, which was really a civil rights bill for the whole world. And I tried to change the law that any citizen could be the president of the United States, but we didn't succeed in that. We were able to get the H-1 freeway, \$500 million for the H-1 freeway. And the East-West Center. You see, the East-West Center came about because, well, let me go back. Senator [George Armistead] Smathers from Florida introduced a bill for a North-South Center. But then nobody followed up. So, therefore, there's no North-[South] Center. But it was lucky that we were there to follow up on the East-West Center. Otherwise, there would be no East-West Center. We followed up, and the House of Representatives, [John James] Rooney [D-New York], never liked the East-West Center. When the bill went over there, he really tried to chop it down. And every time there was an appropriation, he wanted to chop down the appropriations. But we were very steadfast in our vote for the East-West Center. And that's why the East-West Center is here. There was a follow-up for the East-West Center.

DT: Would you agree with the many people who believe that the East-West Center came about as a result of Jack [John] Burns mentioning this to Bobby Baker, and Lyndon [B.] Johnson needed a talking point in his campaign for the presidency?

HF: Well, I don't know what really happened there. That was before my time. But, it was Johnson's strong position. Johnson was a majority leader of the Senate. And he was the

chairman of the executive committee on appropriations. So, he was the one that shoved the appropriation in.

DT: In the Mutual Security Act [of 1960], I believe. [The bill creating the East-West Center was passed May 2, 1960, and attached to the Mutual Security Act of 1960.]

HF: Yes. And when it went to the House, Rooney didn't like it. But in conference, he held on to it.

DT: So you wouldn't dispute that feeling that it was probably Lyndon Johnson . . .

HF: No, I don't dispute that feeling at all.

DT: But you're feeling a great pride in that you were able to withstand these efforts to decrease and diminish the appropriations for the East-West Center.

HF: Yes, and not only, we followed up by getting the appropriations. Yeah, we helped by getting the appropriations.

DT: Yeah, very critical, increasingly critical because after the first few years, well, it began to look like it might die.

HF: Yes, yes.

DT: Some of your Southern colleagues might not have enjoyed your position on civil rights. Did you have any remembrance of, discussions about the civil rights issue with them?

HF: No, no. You see, in the Senate, every man is his own man. And you will find that there are maybe fifty different types of Republicans or fifty different types of Democrats. Each man represents his own opinion of what his role should be, well, what his party role should be. And they respect your opinion on everything. They may not like it, but they don't argue with you. And it's been that way in every issue, almost.

DT: Do you continue to keep in touch with some of your former colleagues . . .

HF: Yes.

DT: . . . in the Senate?

HF: Yes, they write me, and they come through here. And I help in their campaign by some contributions, like in this fight between [Robert J.] Dole and [George] Bush, I couldn't be for one or the other. So I sent each a contribution.

(Laughter)

DT: That was a safe thing to do, wasn't it?

HF: Yes, yes.

DT: So you have a winner in any event now. Well, that brings up the question about you finally

came to the conclusion you wanted to retire? Was this a decision made on your own part or were people pressuring you to get out or did you feel that somebody wanted to run or . . .

HF: Well, you see, I really wanted to be in the Senate for one term. That's all I wanted.

DT: Oh, really?

HF: Yeah. I knew that Delegate [to Congress, Joseph] Farrington had spent \$50,000 a year while he was in Washington. And I felt that I could spend \$50,000 and (then) come (back) home. But when I went there, I found that I was in a different position than Delegate Farrington. Delegate Farrington didn't have a vote. But I had a vote. They would come to me, they would entertain me, rather than I entertain them. So I didn't have to spend the \$50,000 (chuckles) that I thought that I would have to spend. So I was ready to quit, but the Republican party didn't have anybody to run in my place. So they said, "Well, you got to run again."

So I ran. Then I said, "I want to quit again," they didn't have anybody. So when the third [fourth?] time, well, [William F.] Quinn said he wanted to run. I said, "Fine." [Quinn ran against and was defeated by Spark Matsunaga in the race for Fong's former U.S. Senate seat.]

DT: So you were happy to get out.

HF: Yes, I was happy to get out.

DT: You've been fortunate, too, in a business sense, had you not? Because before you went off to the United States Senate, you recruited a very talented group of younger people to operate various of your businesses.

HF: Yeah. I've got very (capable business associates).

DT: I know this has always impressed me a great deal.

HF: I've got very fine associates and they kept the business going. And I didn't have to worry about anything at all. Of course, I had to come home (from time to time to see if everything was all right).

DT: Check up on it from time to time.

HF: But they really created a very fine business, so, I was very lucky in that respect.

CC: Through all of this and you got to see the political scene quite a bit and people come and go, but, you know, there are some of the names that we all know and were important at the same time and in a different way. But, what was your feeling about Jack Burns? I mean, you knew him for a long time.

HF: Well, Jack Burns used to tell people that he and I used to shoot craps together. (Chuckles) Now, I don't remember that. (He was much younger than I and we were not in the same group in Kalihi together.)

(Laughter)

HF: Jack Burns is much younger than I. Yeah, he was much younger than I. But we grew up in the district of Kalihi. And we were very close to each other. In fact, some of the friends tell me that Jack Burns told them to vote for me. And I think he did. I think we got along very nicely. He and I, we got along very nicely.

CC: Let's stop there and change tapes to get into some of the . . .

JC: The following is tape number four, continuation of interview with Hiram Fong and it's the last tape.

DT: Senator, I believe we were talking about Jack Burns. I think you had some recollections about him and I've forgotten quite where you were, but you might like to pick it up there.

HF: Well, Jack and I got along very nicely. And every time he wanted anything, he got a reply very, very fast. I remember that one day I received a letter from an Indian student. He wrote to me, he says, "Dear Brother," he says, "I have written to my father, Jack Burns, that I want to come to America. And will you help me?"

So, I wrote a letter to Jack Burns. "Dear Jack," I said. "As the father's responsibility supersedes that of the brother," I said, "I'm turning this letter to you (for processing)."

(Laughter)

HF: I never got a reply from Jack. But, he and I, we got along very nicely. And whenever he wanted anything, I was able to get it for him. [Elmer] Cravalho, especially, too, when he was speaker of the house, he always asked me for a lot of help in Washington. And when I took the office, I told (my staff) that this is a non-partisan office, we will serve the people of Hawai'i and whoever asks for anything, well, let's go and get it. I had a good staff, very fine staff in Washington and I was very lucky in that I had two very, very smart girls that ran my office.

DT: You mentioned Cravalho, you didn't have anything to do with putting his coalition together in '59 . . .

HF: No, no, no.

DT: . . . behind the scenes, because I know a number of Republicans joined in with him in order to win the speakership just before statehood. So you didn't have any influence in the legislature . . .

HF: No, I didn't have any, no.

DT: You just smiled, I guess, and watched the parade go by, shall we say. Well, do you have a reaction---you say you had an excellent relationship with Jack Burns. Bill Quinn, did. . . .

HF: Well, Bill kind of forgot when he got into office that it was a coalition of ethnic candidates that really got him elected. He forgot that. And when he got in there, he and [James] Kealoha [his lieutenant governor] kind of squabbled. And he never called upon me to discuss politics. Not once was I ever consulted on anything (concerning) politics. And here he was the leader of the party at home and I was over there in Washington. And I think that really weakened

the Republican party.

DT: So you had closer ties really with Burns as governor than you did with Quinn?

HF: Yes, yes, yes.

DT: That's interesting.

CC: Do you think Mr. Quinn ever really understood a lot of the subtleties about the state of Hawai'i? Do you think that he failed to see some of the things that he should have seen?

HF: Well, everybody says that he was too close to Castle & Cooke. He was too close to the MacNaughtons [Boyd and Malcolm] that he didn't feel that he should associate with the others. That was the feeling.

CC: So I know that Kealoha was his lieutenant governor, they had a major fight over . . .

HF: Yes.

CC: . . . patronage and . . .

HF: That's right. I tried to get Kealoha not to run against him [in 1962], but Kealoha's just too stubborn. Yeah, he wanted to run. But we see as soon as Kealoha ran against him that the party would be split up.

DT: Except for his one campaign in running for the territorial senate and, of course, as he ran for governor the first time, Quinn didn't really have much of the feeling for the grassroots of Hawai'i.

HF: That's right. He was a newcomer.

DT: And Jack Burns made it easy for him the first time around, we might observe, because he sort of refused to come back [from Washington, D.C., where Burns served as Hawai'i's delegate to Congress] and campaign for governor in '59 [against Quinn]. Remember, he came back late and he got caught on a massage parlor table with newspaper reporters around, that sort of thing.

HF: But I think the coalition was very effective.

DT: You would still stick with the balanced ticket idea.

HF: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That balanced ticket was very strong, very strong.

DT: So the loss of Kealoha really did in Quinn and . . .

HF: Yeah, it did, it did.

DT: What about [George] Ariyoshi who came later [in 1974], after the long Burns tenure succeeding Quinn? We came up to George Ariyoshi. This time, of course, you've retired, or most of the time you've retired from politics . . .

HF: No, I hadn't retired yet. [Fong retired in 1977.]

DT: You were still in office or were you . . .

HF: There was quite a number of my friends who wanted me to run for the governorship.

DT: Ah.

HF: Yes. They wanted me to run for the governorship. And going back, when we had statehood [in 1959], Samuel [Wilder] King had intended to run for the governorship. (While sick at the Queen's Hospital (he) called me (to see him). He said, "Hiram, I'm going to run for the governorship. Will you run for the lieutenant governorship (with me)?"

And I told Sam King, "No, my friends want me to run for the Senate. I think I want to try for the Senate."

He said, "Well, let's get together." (Sam King did not recover from his sickness. He died.) If he had ran for the governorship, I think he would have won.

DT: Oh, this is Samuel Wilder King?

HF: Samuel Wilder King, yes.

DT: Oh, I was thinking of a later period when Sam P. King ran for governor.

HF: Oh.

DT: You remember his son ran for governor against Jack Burns on one occasion [in 1970].

HF: (Sam had) said he wouldn't run, (so) [D. Hebden] Porteus ran. So I supported Porteus. And he [King] came in afterwards and spoiled the ticket [i.e., King challenged Porteus in the Republican primary for governor in 1970]. And I was really angry with him. But then later on, I recommended him [King] for the judgeship. I felt that we have taken away so much from the Hawaiians, let's give back the Hawaiians something. So, I recommended [him] for that. I should have (continued to be) very sore with (him)—angry because he came in and spoiled Porteus's chances for the governorship.

DT: Would you still place so much emphasis upon ethnicity?

HF: Oh, yes.

DT: Do you think that it's ethnicity or is it a question of getting to know people and knowing people in various ethnic groups. If you know them, you're likely to get their support even if they're [not] of your ethnic background.

HF: You know how difficult it is to know everybody.

DT: Oh, yes, yes.

HF: You only know a certain few. You know several thousand people, probably. But here you got

300,000 people, I mean, voters. And (ethnicity) is very, very strong. The ethnic issue, very, very strong.

CC: Do you think it's getting stronger or weaker? Do you think that it's---or just that it's a major factor?

HF: It all depends who runs. It all depends who runs, yeah. You've got to gauge your opponent. Who runs and sometimes it doesn't play too much of a factor and sometimes, very important.

DT: Yet there has been significant occasions when, seemingly, ethnicity was not a factor. For example, Daniel Inouye polling 90 percent of the votes in heavy *Haole* areas even when his opponent was a *Haole*.

HF: Yes, when you are already established in a position, usually they continue to vote for you.

DT: Then something overrides the ethnicity?

HF: Yeah, yeah.

DT: Mm hmm. Well, I think I mentioned [George] Ariyoshi or did I mention Ariyoshi?

CC: Yeah, did people ask you to maybe run against Ariyoshi?

HF: Yes, yes, yes. And I said that if I'm going to run for the governorship, I might as well go back to Washington. And I said, "There's no comparison between the two (offices)." Here you're dealing with a million people. But over there, I'm dealing with the whole world. And you can make history there. But here, although you have a house and all (the) patronage, there's no similarity. The power is in Washington. That's where the power is. Actually, whatever you do affects (all the fifty states and the whole) world. But here, you just administrate to a local group.

CC: So you felt that if you were going to go through all that personal expense, why, you might as well stay in Washington.

HF: That's right, that's right, yeah.

DT: But you never quite developed the close ties with an Ariyoshi as you did with Jack Burns, I gather.

HF: No, Ariyoshi was a little too much party-oriented. He was very, very Democratic in that respect. Jack Burns was not.

DT: Jack Burns was more . . .

HF: Yeah, he was more, more individualistic.

DT: Interpersonal relationships.

HF: Interpersonal, yeah.

DT: Mm hmm. [John] Waihee, does that ring a bell with you? Have you been—are you ready to join with [D.G.] “Andy” Anderson, who, I think just yesterday said that . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JC: The following is a continuation of the Hiram Fong interview on tape number four, slight overlap.

DT: Are you ready to join with Andy Anderson who, I think, just yesterday said that if he were to be back here in Hawai‘i now he’d vote for Waihee the next time around. He had run against him.

HF: Well, Waihee has been very active, and he’s done the right things so far. He’s done the right things.

DT: For example . . .

HF: Well, he’s trying to get affordable housing. He’s trying to get the waterfront going. He’s trying to get into the educational process. He’s getting into every field, almost, and trying to do something. Would he be able to accomplish them, that’s another question.

DT: In other words, he may be successful in the long run if he’s able to accomplish these things. If he’s not able to accomplish them, well, then, I guess your opinion would change.

HF: That’s right, that’s right. But he’s done (an) effective job so far.

CC: How about the Republican party today? Seems to be a lot of noise about newcomers into the party and that sort of thing. What do you think of all that?

HF: Well, you know you got a very peculiar state here. There’s no state like Hawai‘i. There’s no state like Hawai‘i. Here you have one big city. The big city is always liberal, yeah. The other states, you have the outlying districts, the farmers, who are considered conservative. Here our farmers are agribusiness. They have the right of collective bargaining. They’re unionized. They’re Democratic. Then now you have the hotels that are coming up (and about) all (are) unionized. You see the problem here? This is the problem of Hawai‘i. If they break up the plantations, give each person a plot to farm, it may be a little different. May change a few things. But as long as you have unionists, unions in these various agribusiness, you’re going to find that it’s difficult for a Republican.

CC: Okay, but we have had---the Democratic party has been in control or major position of power for some time now. Is there some sense that the Republican party can use that to their advantage?

HF: Yes, we had a chance. But then the process was such that anyone who wants to run for lieutenant governor could run for lieutenant governor. (Chuckles) And there was no selection. Really, the parties should have gotten together and says, “Okay, you’ll run and you’ll run.”

Just balance the ticket.

DT: In other words, you tend to agree with Frank Fasi that [John Henry] Felix should not have been the candidate [in 1986] . . .

HF: Yes.

DT: . . . and it should have been somebody other than . . .

HF: Yes.

DT: . . . Felix. Uh huh.

HF: Yes. Felix had never tried. You can't run for an office when you never been in an office before. Run for a big office, I'm talking about. It's very difficult. Better get a man who has been tried by the people.

CC: But even so, the Republican party now has Frank Fasi on their side and he's the mayor of Honolulu. You have Patricia Saiki in Congress.

HF: Yes, yes.

DT: Hannibal Tavares, mayor [of Maui County].

CC: Hannibal Tavares, mayor in Maui [county], and so the question is, what do you see the future of the Republican party? Can it grow or is it going to be some time?

HF: If we can develop the candidates, you got to develop good candidates. Now the candidates must have the talent, they must have experience, and must have the knowledge, and must have the charisma to get to the people. If we can get that kind of a candidate and put him forward, we can win.

CC: Do you see problems developing out of these, looks like fights, between, say, the Hal Jones [i.e., religious right-wing] faction of the current Republican party and the established leadership? Has that caused problems for the party?

HF: I don't think so. I don't think so. I think they are just fighting for this present election, and if they want to take over the party, they can take over the party. But the party actually is not the thing. When I ran, it was more individualistic support. You had to go out and get the people to support you. The party does a certain amount of work, but actually, you don't have to depend on the party too much. If you have the know-how, you have the wherewithal, and you can really project yourself, you can win (even with little) party support.

DT: Do you see any individuals then that may be attracted to the Republican party for the future?

HF: I think that the Democrats have already gotten all their slots filled. And it's for the newcomers now to get into the Republican party to get into position. It's difficult to get into the Democratic party now because every office is almost filled. So if a person really wants to get ahead, he should really work hard and try to get into the Republican party.

DT: So you would, if you were the Republicans, you'd particularly be welcoming Vietnamese these days, . . .

HF: Yes.

DT: . . . and the Filipinos, and . . .

HF: Yes.

DT: . . . people coming in from the Mainland United States.

HF: Yes, yes, yes.

DT: So you would view it as being within the realm of possibility.

HF: There is.

DT: I know there's some Republicans we've spoke to [who] seem to feel, they throw up [their] hands and say it's inevitable, the Republican party is never going to be able to snap back.

HF: Oh, no, I don't have that pessimist view. The Republican party has a chance if they can get the good candidates.

DT: All right, on that note, I guess we say thank you very much.

HF: Okay.

DT: We appreciate your spending the time with us.

CC: Thank you.

JC: That's the end of the Hiram Fong interview.

END OF INTERVIEW

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